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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [SF](#)  
SUBJECT: EASTERN CAPE ANC PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

¶1. (U) On September 12 the African National Congress (ANC) concluded its sixth Eastern Cape Provincial conference by voting for the new Eastern Cape Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) and Chairperson. A total of 1963 delegates were accorded a voting status at the conference despite earlier glitches that led to delays in the start of the conference and the election process.

¶2. (U) The leadership race was closely contested between Finance MEC Mcebisi Jonas, regarded as the favorite to win, and Health MEC Phumulo Masualle. In a surprise turn of events Masualle beat Jonas with just 100 votes to claim the leadership in the Province. Jonas commanded support from the two biggest regions, Amathole and OR Tambo municipalities, as well as the ANC Youth and Veteran's Leagues, while Masualle, who is also the South African Communist Party (SACP) national treasurer, had backing mainly from the smaller regions. It was, however, the decision by rural development Minister Gugile Nkwinti to throw his weight behind Masualle that swayed the vote and saw Masualle's lead rise to 100, enough to clinch the leadership. Comment: It is interesting to note that Masualle was an avid Zuma supporter at the Polokwane conference which ousted Mbeki. Although Jonas is also a Zuma man, his close association with another Polokwane contender, businessman Tokyo Sexwale, now the human settlements minister, has cast doubt on his dedication to Zuma and appears to have ultimately cost him the Provincial Chairmanship. End Comment.

¶3. (U) The run-up to the conference saw a vicious lobbying campaign for the leadership that resulted in some meetings turning into street fights as rival groups, armed with firearms and knives attacked each other. The situation became so nasty that Luthuli House had to dispatch a high-profile delegation, including Tony Yengeni and Jessie Duarte, to address more than 400 delegates from the Amathole region in Butterworth prior to the conference. It, however, appears that the friction within the Province has not been eased as supporters of the new provincial chairperson soon lobbied to have Eastern Cape Premier, Noxolo Kiviet removed. A special resolution was passed by the conference calling for Masualle to lead the Province, all that remains before it is implemented is for the new PEC to enforce it. If Masualle becomes Premier he could order a council reshuffle and appoint new MEC's.

¶4. (SBU) Comment. Although the Eastern Cape is traditionally an ANC stronghold it has in recent years seen political infighting, corruption and nepotism amongst its own ranks leading to the near collapse of municipalities and the provincial administration in the Province. It has an appalling record of service delivery, a matter that could have been discussed at the conference. However, due to disputes over accreditation the start of the conference was delayed leading to inadequate discussions on organizational renewal. A provincial general council will now have to be organized to debate policy issues, given that there was no time for the planned breakaway sessions at the conference. End comment.